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## **City of Salisbury and Rowan County to Partner in Salisbury-Rowan READS! FREE Book Giveaway**

*Local Municipalities Join Forces to Offer Five-week Program to Promote Reading to Children*

Salisbury, NC \_July 7, 2009 – The City of Salisbury and Rowan County will partner to offer a five-week summer reading enrichment program entitled, “Read to Your Child Days: Salisbury-Rowan READS!” The learning initiative and free book giveaway will take place on Wednesday evenings from 5 pm -7 pm and the program will travel to a different location throughout Rowan County each week. The purpose of the program is to promote reading to children, encourage children to obtain a free library card, and to provide a free book to all children in attendance each week. Each week, events will offer free refreshments and giveaways, story time by local government leaders, emergency service vehicle displays, games for children, and exciting door prizes. A complete Nintendo Wii System will be given away each week as a grand prize.

The City/County reading project is the result of a joint meeting held between City Council members and County Commissioners in March of this year. Through unanimous agreement, attendees approved working together to provide improvements in the community. Education was recognized as a priority and discussion was held regarding a February 2009 report by Dr. Suzanne Morse. Morse had previously addressed Salisbury City Council during the annual council retreat and reported a strong need for community support for local education. Morse, the author of *Smart Communities*, offered that children, who are not reading at the appropriate level by third grade, hold strong potential to become drop-outs by the time they reach high school. Morse offered statistical data that demonstrated the relative connection between student drop-outs and a subsequent rise in criminal activity and youth violence. During her presentation, Morse challenged the community to become more involved by supporting the Rowan-Salisbury School System and fostering support for students in the form of reading and math skills. As educational support and youth mentoring outreach are existing components of the city’s established gang intervention and positive youth initiative, Salisbury City Council adopted a 2009-2010 City Council Goal, directing additional support to create opportunity for reading and math skill attainment.

During May, the combined city and county boards met with the Rowan-Salisbury School Board to discuss future plans of action and ways to provide a means of support. Reading was recognized and agreed to be of vital importance for the success of all children. Mayor Susan Kluttz, speaking on behalf of the Salisbury City Council shares, “The City

of Salisbury is proud to partner with Rowan County by investing in the success of our children and striving to improve their ability to read. A love of reading is truly one of the greatest tools a child can receive and reading is a key component in ensuring a solid educational foundation for the future. Reading to a child strengthens the emotional bond between a parent and a child. Reading also helps children learn about the world in which they live and allows them to better comprehend written language.” Mayor Kluttz shares that support from local municipalities has been outstanding. Kluttz contacted each mayor in Rowan County personally and explained the joint city-county venture to promote reading and support the local school system. “The support from local government throughout Rowan County has been amazing. The towns of China Grove, Cleveland, East Spencer, Faith, Granite Quarry, Landis, Rockwell, and Spencer, along with the City of Kannapolis, have pledged their support on behalf of children. Together we hope to assist in raising youth self-esteem, strengthening family bonds, and promoting high school achievements.” The Mayor acknowledges the dedicated support received from Dr. Judy Grissom, Superintendent of the Rowan-Salisbury Schools, Dr. Sarah Hensley, Director of Elementary Education, and Jeff Hall, Director of the Rowan Public Library. “This event supports our city’s established gang prevention effort and provides encouragement for the development of individual reading skills. It is often said that it takes an entire village to raise a child; in Rowan County, all villages are stepping forward and partnering to assist in providing a positive future for each and every child.”

Municipalities, participating in the Salisbury-Rowan READS! Program, will proclaim the July 15 – August 12 observance publicly during their respective municipal meetings. Proclamations are currently being prepared and will be offered in the coming weeks. The five-week schedule for book giveaways is as follows with the site location changing each week:

July 15: Rowan Public Library, *201 W. Fisher Street, Salisbury*  
July 22: Spencer Library Park, *4th Street, Spencer*  
July 29: South Branch Rowan Library, *920 Kimball Road, China Grove*  
Aug. 5: East Branch Rowan Library, *110 Broad Street, Rockwell*  
Aug. 12: Cleveland Town Hall, *302 E. Main Street, Cleveland*

Rowan County Commission Chairman Carl Ford notes, “Rowan County is pleased to join forces with the City of Salisbury to assist in promoting the importance of reading. When children are read to by an adult, their interest in reading grows and their language skills are able to develop more fully. Reading allows children to learn proper grammar and provides the ability for expressing one’s self verbally. In addition, reading exposes children to new vocabulary words and by reading to a child, children are thus provided with the opportunity to hear correct pronunciation of words.” Chairman Ford echoes the sentiments of Mayor Kluttz in offering his appreciation to all municipalities that have pledged their support for the reading program. “I am truly proud of our local government officials and their dedication to the children throughout Rowan County. I encourage citizens to attend one of these exciting events that have been planned to positively impact the reading capabilities of children and to further enhance high school achievement.”

Parents are encouraged to attend the weekly location that is most convenient. Upon arrival at the event, parents should first advance to the library card registration area set up at the entrance to the library or selected site location. At this location, Rowan Public

Library staff will assist parents in registering their children for a library card. Parents are asked to please bring a drivers license for identification purposes. If children are already in possession of a library card, the card will need to be presented at the time of registration. Parents should register all children in attendance to be eligible for door prizes drawings. Once registered, children will receive a hand-stamp to denote that the registration process has been completed. A designated free book area will offer titles separated into categories by age and reading level. Children will proceed to the free book area and display their hand-stamp to receive a free book with the title of choice. Parents and guardians are asked to please assist children with their book selection. Children will receive plastic bags for carrying books and for collecting additional free giveaways to be distributed through on-site booths and displays.

Beginning at 5:15 pm, children's story-time sessions will take place every fifteen minutes. Parents and children will receive a schedule of reading sessions during the initial library card registration process. Each story will be read to children by a mayor, council member, county commissioner, town board member, or municipal manager. Parents are asked to please join children during story-time sessions and to remain with their children at all times. Announcements will be conducted outside of the library via a P.A. system to alert parents and children when story-times are ready to commence.

Parents and children will have opportunity to visit numerous displays in between story-time sessions. Local city and county departments will man booths and provide information and free giveaways to children in attendance. Emergency vehicles will be on display and citizens are welcome to interact with station attendees to learn more about these vehicles and the services they provide. Citizens will have opportunity to participate in free game activities and free refreshments will be provided.

Numerous door prizes will be offered at the conclusion of the event, each week. Door prize registration will take place during the initial phase of library card registration for children. Children, preschool age through students entering grade 12, are eligible for door prizes. A grand prize of a Nintendo Wii System, valued at \$249, will be given away each week of the five-week program. Door prize drawings will be held at 7 pm and prizes will be awarded to children and students only. Adults are not eligible for door prizes. Children must be present at the time of the drawing to claim any door prize.

Rowan County is made up of nineteen departments that are committed to providing a wealth of services to County residents and businesses. For more information regarding Rowan County local government, please visit [www.co.rowan.nc.us](http://www.co.rowan.nc.us) on the World Wide Web. The City of Salisbury is an equal opportunity employer with over 180 different job classifications and 400 full time positions. For more information regarding the City of Salisbury and its services and departments, please visit us on the web at [www.salisburync.gov](http://www.salisburync.gov).

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